

Address to Union of B.C. Municipalities Annual Convention

Premier Gordon Campbell

September 28, 2007

Check against delivery

It's great to be back here at the UBCM, and let me just start today by giving a special thank-you to Brenda Binnie for the work that she's done and to Castlegar council for letting her spend so much time, on behalf of all municipalities in the province, working as president of the UBCM.

Today is a special day, because there's someone here today who is probably presiding over his last UBCM convention. You have talked throughout this week about the climate of change, and this is a gentleman who reflects that climate of change. I remember him when he was young. I should tell you he remembers me when I was young: Richard Taylor.

I've spent a considerable amount of my time in public life, and Richard Taylor exemplifies a public servant: someone who listens, someone who learns and someone who works to find solutions that bring people together; someone who's able to reflect on the challenges that we face in the world and say, you know, there may be different ways of responding to different situations, but we can find an answer if we learn from one another.

I can't tell you how pleased I am to have been working with Richard for so long, first as a councillor, then as a mayor, more recently as the Premier, and before that as the Leader of the Opposition. He's open, he's straightforward, he's steadfast, and he's a man of integrity.

So, Richard, I'd like you come up, if you don't mind, for a second.

This is not a self-portrait of Richard. This is actually a mask, a raven mask by artist Andy Bruce. The raven represents the spirit of intelligence and wisdom and, more importantly for all of us in this room, the teacher, and I want to thank Richard for all of the work you've done for all of us.

If I could, I'd like to read from this proclamation: "On behalf of the Province of British Columbia, I proudly recognize Richard Taylor for his exemplary and extraordinary contributions to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities over the last 25 years. Under Richard's direction as executive director from 1985 to 2007, the UBCM has ensured local interests have remained provincial priorities. He has brought together local governments and the Province in a longstanding spirit of partnership, mutual respect and understanding. His policies and actions at times have reflected UBCM's mission and values to provide a common voice for local governments.

"Mr. Taylor's professional accomplishments are rooted in steadfast personal integrity. Notably, under his leadership, the UBCM supported the Province's new relationship with First Nations through agreements with First Nations and the Government of Canada; promoted multiculturalism and equity in B.C. communities; and directed the implementation of the innovative Community Charter. Through these and other significant initiatives, Richard Taylor has established a legacy that will continue to help communities across British Columbia to remain vibrant, sustainable and prosperous."

Thank you very much, Richard.

Last year when I came and talked with you at the UBCM, we talked about housing, health, urban design. In the last 12 months, we've made some significant progress on all of those fronts. In the weeks to come, you're going to hear lots more about new ways we hope to help you maintain communities that are liveable and vibrant. You're going to hear much more about housing and new plans to help the homeless and the mentally ill. You're going to hear about new steps that we will take to help seniors stay healthy and what we learned through the Conversation on Health.

But today, I want to focus on the theme of your convention: climate change. It's a monumental challenge, largely imposed of our own making. It's a challenge that requires us to think beyond the immediate future and to imagine a world that we want our children and grandchildren to inherit.

Our grandparents and great-grandparents lived through the first truly global call to action. It was billed as a war to make the world safe for democracy, World War I. It didn't quite work out that way, but democracy now clearly rules most of the industrialized world, and we're better off for it.

Our parents and our grandparents fought the next Great War, World War II. It, too, was supposed to end all wars, and although it sure didn't accomplish that goal, it did save us all from a terrible fate.

We all benefited from the selfless acts and sacrifice of our forefathers who fought and won those wars. Ours is a war that's totally different: not a war of territory or nation states or ideology. It's not a war that asks us to give our lives. It's a war that asks us to change our lives. It is a race against time. It's a race against runaway global warming. Carbon emissions and greenhouse gas emissions are an invisible, insidious and unyielding force that threaten much of what we love about where we live.

The test of every generation is whether or not it will give or take away from the generations that follow. I can tell you this: this government, this province, will not turn its back on tomorrow's children.

We intend to act to do our part to fight global warming. Wouldn't we rather be known as a generation that found the courage and the resolve not only to confront the global warming crisis, but to do in a way that dramatically increased our quality of life, renewed our neighbourhoods, revitalized our cities, and restored our environment? Whether we like it or not, the battle against global warming is upon us. It's a challenge on a scale unlike anything that we've confronted before. This is not just a call to secure the future. It's a call to enrich it. By actively engaging in committing ourselves without reservation, we can do something that is truly good. In Canada, in our country, we have the opportunity to shape our future. Here, if we can imagine the future, we can make it happen.

Imagine a future where human activities enhance our environment, clean our water, reverse the growth of greenhouse gases and create diverse, active and healthy communities. We can do this, but it's going to take a sea change in behaviour. As Einstein so clearly stated, the world will not evolve past its current state of crisis by using the same thinking that created the situation. This requires us all to think and to act differently, and that's the challenge.

There are always powerful resistance and powerful forces that are resisting fundamental changes in behaviour. The quiet power of the status quo is the false proposition that says, if we change, it will cost us. It doesn't cost us to turn off the lights. It doesn't cost us to turn down the thermostat. It doesn't cost us more to acquire a car that has higher fuel efficiency that might be a little smaller. It doesn't cost us to walk to the store instead of driving to the store. Every one of those actions can save money. Now, if we could only find a way of turning off those 30,000 government computers each night without causing a security risk, we'd really have something to celebrate. I can tell you, if I've learned anything in government, it's that nothing is simple in government.

The other great myth of the status quo is that there is no cost to doing nothing. Well, we have dozens of communities that are living the experience of change that has resulted from doing nothing because we waited. The pine beetle and the fact that 78 per cent of our pine forests are now infested with pine beetles is a result of the fact that nothing was done. This is not a criticism. I understand why the decisions were made. We waited for cold winters. Cold winters never came. So the pine beetle spread. That is going to cost hundreds of millions and billions of dollars to secure the long-term future of communities as we diversify their economies.

In British Columbia, we don't need to look to the work of the intergovernmental panel on climate change to know we've got a problem. The evidence is all around us, and it obliges all of us to adapt.

This year, we've narrowly averted a flood situation that could have been devastating to thousands of people across our province. It was very tough on

communities in the northwest. It was a serious wake-up call to all of us that we have to adapt to the changes that confront us. To be blunt, this year, we got lucky. We reacted quickly in the face of the flood's threat. We built a partnership with the federal government and with local governments, and the weather co-operated. There were days there in June where we were very, very concerned. We did some important repairs and diking works to protect communities from what could have been untold billions in damage.

But we have to do more to adapt to the real and growing threat of flooding related to global warming, so today, I'm pleased to say that the Province will be taking new steps to tackle that challenge head-on. Starting this year and every year for the next 10 years, we will invest another \$10 million in new flood protection across British Columbia. That \$100 million over the next decade will build on the work that was done this year to secure our communities. We know that you have important infrastructure and maintenance responsibilities, and we'll work with you to bring these up to standards that will meet the needs of communities all over the province.

Just as we did last spring, we'll be asking the federal government to partner with us. What worked last spring was that we had a number of federal MPs, and federal Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day in particular, who decided they were going to do a partnership that prevented damage instead of responding to damage, and I want to say thanks to them for that contribution to the well-being of British Columbians. By establishing the fund now, we'll be able to carry out some dredging and other work that can only be done during the winter.

Dealing with climate change requires long-term thinking and regional planning. It demands that all communities and all regions have their voices fairly heard in Victoria. We want to protect rural representation in the North, in the Cariboo-Thompson and in the Columbia-Kootenays. We want to improve representation by population in growing areas like the Okanagan, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. That is why we'll be asking the Legislature to give the Electoral Boundaries Commission new legal tools, new directions to provide eight more seats in the Legislature, so it represents and reflects the interests of all British Columbians.

You also need new legal tools to help you respond to the challenges of growth in your communities. You've got new demands on energy, water, housing, transportation and other amenities that all require new approaches in planning to reduce our carbon emissions. Next spring, we will act to make greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies and targets a legal requirement of all official community plans and regional growth strategies. We're going to provide new authority to use development cost charges as a way to encourage green development, small-unit housing and small-lot subdivision. You should have the power to waive those charges for any development that you feel will help you

meet your goals of a greener community. And we're going to give you that power to reward smart urban planning.

Currently, we charge extra fees so we can afford to provide services in an area. But projects like Dockside Green in Victoria are being designed so they don't need services. They generate their own energy; they treat their own water; they deal with much of their own waste. Why would we want to penalize behaviours that we want to encourage? We need to flip the old thinking on its head to encourage widespread adoption of those kinds of practices.

The way to reduce costs is to reward green developments with faster approvals and strategies that allow the purchasers of those homes and buildings to avoid costs for municipal services that they won't use. Let's encourage people to have their own sewage treatment. Let's make sure that we're helping them to conserve water and energy. We need to find new ways of taking costs off of green development that will make housing more affordable and save everyone money, not the opposite.

The same way of thinking will be key to our broader provincial plan to reduce greenhouse gases. Later this fall, we will be introducing phase one of our plan. It will be a climate action plan with details and strategies that we have identified so far. I should stress that the plan will not be just about money; it will be about new thinking, changes in regulations and new legislation. It will be transparent about the aggressive goals that we set for ourselves and the gaps that still exist in ensuring we meet them. It will be far-reaching and comprehensive, but it will just be a start. It will be regularly updated with new strategies and actions each year and mandatory public reporting requirements. This may not be easy, but it can be done and it should be done. I know that working with local communities, we will do it.

The Cabinet Committee on Climate Action and the Climate Action Secretariat have had 170-plus presentations from public servants, scientists, environmental organizations, academics and industrial groups.

We met with the UBCM executive to learn about the actions already taken, and we saw on Wednesday the actions many communities have taken in the Green City Awards. I want to say thanks and congratulate those communities for the leadership they've shown.

As a result of the work we've done, to date, we believe it's possible, through strategies we've identified, to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions between 24 and 33 million tonnes. That's enough to get us 60 to 80 per cent of the way toward our target of 33 per cent greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2020.

Identified strategies related to various emission sectors break down as follows: seven to nine million tonnes from electricity; two million tonnes from building;

seven to ten million tonnes from industry, including oil and gas; six to nine million tonnes from transportation; and two to three million tonnes from waste.

Estimating these reductions is not an exact science, but our plan will show how we have come up with these numbers, and it will be submitted to an independent panel for independent verification of those reductions, through a peer review.

Those numbers will change. New strategies will be identified and developed. As we hear from each sector, we will learn more about what they believe is possible.

One of the things we often think about is what there was in the past and what we will have in the future.

I was talking to someone from the pulp industry the other day. They're working on a strategy, in research and development, that they believe will result in a 90 per cent reduction of their greenhouse gases.

As we apply ourselves and our minds to the challenges in front of us, I have no doubt we will surprise ourselves with what we can actually accomplish. The throne speech target for 2020 was aggressive, and we'll all be challenged to meet its goals.

This fall, during the legislative session, we will introduce those targets into law. We will legally require our province to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent below current levels by 2020. A legal target will also be set for 2050. The bill will require us to establish legally binding emission reduction targets for 2012 and 2016 by the December 31, 2008. No other province in Canada has taken such legal measures. British Columbia is going to lead the way.

Following through with the throne speech commitments, we will establish a climate action team to help us with our task. Next month, we'll announce the names of the members of that team. It will be a blue-ribbon team of leaders from business, the scientific and environment communities, First Nations, and academia.

As we said in the Throne Speech, the Climate Action Team will determine the most credible, aggressive and economically viable sector targets possible for 2012 and 2016. It will review the Government's Climate Action Plan and identify further actions we might take in the short and medium term to reduce our emissions and meet the 2020 targets. The team will have until July 31, 2008 to do that job.

The targets identified for 2012 and 2016 must be scientifically supported with viable emission reduction strategies that are economically and fiscally achievable. Those targets will be put out for public review and public comment. They will be accepted or amended and legally mandated, through regulation, by

the end of 2008. Those targets will require us to accurately measure our emissions year after year.

British Columbia and Manitoba were the first provinces to join The Climate Registry, which now includes 40 states and provinces in North America. Through that initiative, we're developing a common approach to measuring, reporting and verifying greenhouse gas emissions. It's a critical part of a long-term strategy.

I went to the Council of the Federation in New Brunswick last year, and we invited, with Manitoba, the other provinces and territories to join us. Every province and territory in Canada intends to join The Climate Registry.

We were the first province in Canada to join the Western Climate Initiative, that now includes California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Manitoba. That's over 60 million people. That initiative has already identified greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020, and is working collaboratively to develop a cap and trade system by next August.

The government supports market mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gases. This government is committed to putting in place a cap and trade system, and we are going to act to create that system with legislation next spring. It will legally require hard caps on GHG emissions from all heavy emitters in British Columbia.

In the coming months, we will hold sectoral symposiums to discuss specific greenhouse gas reduction strategies for heavy emission industries. We will be in Prince George to discuss it with the forest industry, with mining in Terrace, with energy in Fort St. John, with waste and landfill management in Nanaimo, and with agriculture in Kamloops.

As we ask each industry to clean up its act, we must ensure that your provincial government does its part. We will act this fall to become the first provincial government in Canada to legally require its ministries and Crown agencies to be carbon-neutral by 2010 — no ifs, ands or buts.

Every public sector organization will be required by law to produce annual public reports on its progress. This will include accounting of all greenhouse gas emissions for which they are responsible, an annual disclosure of all actions that each organization has taken to reduce those emissions, and a record of all emissions offsets applied against each organization. Local governments will not be included in this legislation.

Through the intent of the Climate Action Charter, we encourage all local governments to become carbon-neutral by 2012. We will share our experience; we'll share what works; we'll let you know what doesn't work. But I know with the 63 communities that signed that Climate Action Charter and others which are

considering it for the future, we're going to succeed in creating carbon-neutral government in British Columbia by 2012.

To achieve our goals, everybody will have to build smarter. Today I'm announcing one way the Province will do that. In the future, all new provincially owned or leased facilities must be built to a minimum of the gold or equivalent criteria. We understand this may involve some additional upfront costs, but we believe there will be significant long-term operating savings.

We will develop new protocols for capital planning that will look at life-cycle costing, to recognize that fact and to show taxpayers why green building makes sense to them and our environment.

And here's another first in Canada. As part of our plan to be carbon-neutral by 2010, we will require all government travel to be carbon neutral starting this year. Emissions associated with government travel will be tracked, calculated, peer-reviewed and audited. We will put in place new measures to reduce unnecessary travel and extend video conferencing. We will counteract travel emissions, through new investments and projects that will reduce, avoid, and sequester an equal or greater volume of greenhouse gases.

Starting this fiscal year, for every tonne of greenhouse gases associated with government travel, the Province will invest \$25 in a new B.C. carbon trust. That money will not be invested in projects outside of British Columbia. Every penny of that trust that comes from British Columbia taxpayers will have to be reinvested in reducing greenhouse gases right here in British Columbia.

The B.C. carbon trust will be launched early next year, and it will provide opportunity for other governments, organizations and citizens to participate in. The offset projects must provide additional reductions from those of existing activities and be measurable and verifiable.

We're going to be sure that British Columbians can have confidence that their tax dollars are invested in valid offset projects right here in B.C. Those projects might include replacing dirty diesel in rural and remote communities, through electrical generation of micro-hydro plants. It might be geothermal heat exchanges in buildings and greenhouses, or they might be reforestation measures to sequester carbon.

I don't pretend to have all the answers to the challenges that are in front of us, or to how we're going to necessarily close that gap between where we are today and where we have to be by 2020, but I do know this: with the right mix of leadership, investment, and above all, individual commitment, we're going to get there.

We're going to require targeted investments and mitigation measures that will put a higher price on carbon emissions, but the benefits will far outweigh the costs.

Existing industries will become more competitive as they pioneer new technologies and find new ways to reduce their emissions.

Just think for a second of Prince Rupert. They opened their brand new container port just a few weeks ago, and the first container will be landing in Prince Rupert on October 1. That's going to open up the north like never before. That great north Pacific gateway will attract more ships from abroad, more people and more goods and services to British Columbia.

Of course, that's going to have an impact on carbon emissions, but just think of it in these terms: that northern gateway reduces shipping times to key markets. It'll also reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Ships that are coming from Asia to Prince Rupert will save up to three days travel time over going to Los Angeles or Long Beach. That's three days worth of carbon emissions for each ship that will not go into the global environment.

Don't tell me that we can't make global warming work for our economy. We can, and we will. We can become a leader in clean technologies, bio-energies, climate research, green development and a whole host of professional services that are only just emerging.

There are enormous opportunities in innovation and new technologies. That's what the new \$25-million innovative clean energy fund was established to help support, and our new energy plan is centred on changing the way we deal with energy. It focuses on conservation and the need to make British Columbia energy self-sufficient by 2016.

We'll also need to give new statutory direction to the B.C. Utilities Commission to support clean, renewable, alternative power projects.

Hydro has just put out a clean power call that will be followed by a bio-energy call early next year. That's going to liberate new investment to turn pine-beetle wood into woodchips, into low carbon gas and clean bio-energy. We can become the bio-energy capital of the world if we are smart in British Columbia, and I know you're smart.

The fact does remain, however, that we will still need some new large scale power projects. The truth is our options for clean large-scale power are very limited. So we're going to begin the process of seriously considering Site C. Extensive consultations and accommodations will be required with First Nations, the province of Alberta, and, of course, the public. Lots of scientific work and environmental impact analysis will need to be done. But I can tell you this: if Site C moves ahead, it will be a public asset and a new heritage asset for B.C. Hydro.

We'll be introducing other measures this fall to ensure that we can take advantage of clean energy opportunities. For example, the Greater Vancouver Regional Water District will be granted new authority to produce and sell clean hydro power to third parties.

We also plan to enact stringent new measures to regulate landfill gases. We'll work closely with the UBCM and others to establish a sensible, rigorous regime for the recovery, sale and use of methane gas from landfills. And while talking about capturing the methane in landfills, we also need to think about reducing the long distance trucking of garbage to landfills.

There's enormous potential, as Nanaimo has found out — enormous potential — to keep volumes of waste out of the waste system, particularly yard, garden and food waste which, in many cases, we load up into our garbage, we get it taken to our landfill, and then later ask someone to ship in some topsoil material for us to use.

There is lots that we can do to reduce the waste flow that we have, and there's even more we can do to put that methane, which is five times more potent than carbon dioxide, to good use in the electricity grid in the province of British Columbia.

Under our plan all new electricity produced will need to have zero greenhouse gas emissions, and all existing power generation will be required to have net zero greenhouse gases by 2016. No coal-fired electricity projects will be permitted without 100 per cent carbon sequestration. All of those requirements will be put in law.

As we develop new forms of power, individuals are going to be critical to our success. Individuals will have huge new potential to realize all sorts of savings as they act to reduce consumption.

The budget consultation process, now underway, offers all citizens a chance to suggest their priorities for green investment. It also provides everyone a chance to suggest how taxes might be targeted to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

But there is one certain way of saving money: conserving energy.

Just think of this: in 2007 we use approximately 10,800 kilowatt-hours for every household in British Columbia. Now, for those of you who can, take yourselves back 40 years... 40 years ago did you feel like your quality of life was substantially lower? Did you not have a television? Forty years ago our energy consumption was 5,650 kilowatt-hours per household. That's a 92 per cent increase. We can do much better than that.

In British Columbia our per capita CO² equivalence per person is about 15.9 tonnes. In Sweden it's 7.7. There's lots of room for us to improve, and I know that we can do it. To put it bluntly, we need to change our behaviour. When we do, we'll all save money.

And we're going to use new technologies to help people get there. Evidence is that the best way to encourage conservation is to show people what they're doing and what they're using. We will give B.C. Hydro new direction to help all residential and commercial customers to install Smart meters.

Now, I don't know where your meter is right now, but I know most meters are outside somewhere, probably behind a couple of weeds and a few bushes. There will still be an outside meter, but you'll now have a meter inside. Your meter inside will show you how much money you're spending per hour for your electrical consumption. When you see how much money you spend per hour, you start thinking about that, right? It'll also show you what your peak-time consumption is, versus your non-peak time consumption. And with some of the steps we're going to take, we're going to be able to explain to people why it's to their benefit to use energy at non-peak times.

As I said, we'll give B.C. Hydro the direction to this. We're going to get Hydro to install a new modern, smart electricity grid that will allow us to take full advantage of the information to help you save money.

Currently there's 1.7 million residential and commercial metres across the province. They're read manually. They will be replaced with these new metres.

That technology will allow for net metering whereby industrial power producers or, even, residential power customers, can sell back into the grid surplus power produced. That would happen with new technologies like solar energy or something like that. It will also allow for green power pricing that will reward consumers for reducing and shifting power consumption to off-peak period. This new level of personal control and choice will provide opportunities for substantial personal savings.

It will be a major financial undertaking, but it will provide huge benefits.

I'm announcing today that we're going to do what it takes to have this project fully in place within the next five years, by 2012.

The new B.C. Building Code will make smart meters mandatory in all new buildings and in every residential unit, but it will do more. Our new Green Building Code will implement the highest energy efficiency standards in Canada. New buildings and homes in B.C. will cost less to heat and significantly reduce their impact on the environment and the climate.

California and Washington State have had these kinds of codes in place for 25 years. If we'd had this kind of code in place since 1986, we would have been able to save enough power to provide power to 250,000 additional homes today without one additional kilowatt of generating capacity. That's the power of conservation. That's the power of what we can do when we act individually.

Of all the major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, none is more important than transportation. In British Columbia 40 per cent of our emissions are from transportation. To meet the targets for 2020 we're going to have to dramatically reduce our transportation carbon footprint. That involves three core elements: improving efficiency, reducing carbon intensity of fuels and, above all, driving less and shifting to alternative forms of transportation, especially in urban areas. To that end, we'll be introducing a bill next spring to require the adoption of California tailpipe emission standards to be phased in between 2009 and 2016. It will place an obligation on vehicle manufacturers to sell a fleet of vehicles in B.C. with ever-increasing fuel efficiency.

Again, I should report back to you that at the meeting of the Council of the Federation, with all the provinces and territories, every province and territory has agreed to adapt those standards, with the exception of Ontario.

That requirement is estimated to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from automobiles by some 30 per cent compared to 2003 models. That's 30 per cent by 2016. This one change alone will ultimately reduce greenhouse gas emissions by some two million tonnes annually.

We will also be the first province in Canada to legally adopt California's low-carbon fuel content standards. That requirement will reduce carbon intensity of all passenger vehicles by at least a further 10 per cent by 2020. It will be complemented by the province's incentive program to encourage the acquisition of hybrids. The Minister of Finance is looking for improvements to extend tax incentives on hybrid vehicles to other low-emission vehicles. My advice: the smart money's on maximum fuel efficiency and minimum greenhouse gas emissions.

We need to do more, and we will. We will proceed with the Gateway transportation project, and we will twin the Port Mann Bridge. That project will relieve congestion, reduce emissions from idling vehicles, lower travel costs, strengthen our goods movement capability, connect families more rapidly, and for the first time in 20 years, it will re-establish rapid bus service across the Port Mann Bridge. Up to 2,700 transit passengers per hour will benefit from that one improvement. How can anyone be against that?

In partnership with TransLink, it will provide almost a quarter-billion dollars in public transit and cycling improvements as part of that Port Mann project.

Meeting our greenhouse gas targets represents a challenge, but more importantly, it does provide for us an opportunity. We're already in the midst of some of the most ambitious rapid transit investments in provincial history. Like the Millennium Line, extending the SkyTrain by 72 per cent. Like the \$2 billion Canada Line which is proceeding ahead of schedule and on budget. And like the Evergreen Line which will connect the fast-growing communities of the northeast sector with long-overdue rapid transit options.

Let me clear: the Evergreen line is going to get built. It will be built according to the best advice of experts in the field. It will be built to reflect the urban form that is taking place. It will be built to make sure that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We're going to continue to work with TransLink, with the northeast sector of the greater Vancouver area, and we're going to continue to build partnerships with Canada to make sure that it gets built as quickly as possible.

But impressive as these projects are, they're not enough.

Today the percentage of transit riders in Metro Vancouver is about 12 per cent. In the leading cities of the world, be it London or Paris or Hong Kong, it's between 20 and 25 per cent. We want British Columbia to be a global leader in public transit, and we're going to do what it takes to make that happen. That's going to require major new investments, and we'll be shortly laying out a new transit plan that will touch every community in B.C. That plan will include an unprecedented increase in our bus fleets to ensure every community in every part of the province has access to reliable, efficient, clean public transit.

Today I can tell you that we're also going to act to help communities throughout the province with an investment immediately. We want all communities to have the opportunity to upgrade their bus fleets, so we'll be providing an additional \$50 million this year to help B.C. Transit buy new, clean buses to expand transit services across British Columbia.

In the coming weeks we'll lay out our transit vision for the province. It will be on a scale and a scope aimed at making B.C. a global leader in public transit. It will help ensure that British Columbians have the choices they need to do what they want to do, which is reduce their impact on the environment and greenhouse gas emissions. All British Columbians deserve to have all sorts of transit alternatives available to them.

You know, every generation faces its challenge. They're shaped by the world they live in and the individual experience. Leadership is not about waiting. It's about acting, for seeing where you want to go and then pursuing that goal and that vision with commitment, with dedication and with the knowledge that when we work together, we can succeed. We all need to work together on this. Our children and our grandchildren are watching us.

There has never been a time when we are better prepared to take these steps into the future. Our economy has turned around. Investment is returning in record amounts. There is nothing that we can't accomplish when we work together. We're ready to take this on. Let's strive to set an example that our children can point to with pride and that our grandchildren will look to with thanks. We can. We must. We will.

Thank you very much.